DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 388 893 CG 026 235

AUTHOR Morrow, Jim M.
TITLE Revision, Validation, and Follow-Up of Admissions Standards in Counselor Education.
PUB DATE 30 Oct 93
NOTE 5p.; Paper presented at the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Convention (Charleston, SC, October 30, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Academic Standards; Accreditation (Institutions); *Admission Criteria; *Counselor Training; Grade Point Average; Higher Education; *Masters Programs; Program Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS Council for Accred of Counsel and Relat Educ Prog; Graduate Record Examinations

ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1986 the first of a series of studies was undertaken by the faculty members in counselor education at Western Carolina University to revise and validate the admissions standards for the master's degree programs in counseling. Impetus for these efforts was provided by a request from the Dean of the Graduate School for all graduate programs to review their admissions standards and by the decision of the faculty to undertake a self study in preparation for a planned request for accreditation consideration by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). In the first phase all graduates of the counseling program (N=171) were rated independently by four members of the faculty. Exemplary and marginal students' Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores and grade point average (GPA) were examined. GPA was the highest correlate of faculty ratings of graduate's ability. Phase Two found the GRE Analytical score as the most powerful predictor of graduate GPA. In Phase Three tentative new admissions standards were set, examined, and adopted. Finally, in Phase Four a follow up study was conducted to determine effectiveness of the new admissions standards. The GRE Analytical score remained the best predictor of academic performance in counselor education. Additional evidence of the effectiveness of the revised admissions standards was reported. (JBJ)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ED. /CATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

ED 388 893

Revision, Validation, and Follow-up of Admissions Standards in Counselor Education

Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Convention

Charleston, S. C., October 30, 1993

Jim M. Morrow, Western Carolina University

In the spring of 1986 the first of a series of studies was undertaken by the faculty members in counselor education at Western Carolina University to revise and validate the admissions standards for the master's degree programs in counseling. Impetus for these efforts was provided by a request from the Dean of the Graduate School for all graduate programs to review their admissions standards and by the decision of the faculty in counselor education to undertake a self-study in preparation for a planned request for accreditation consideration by CACREP.

Phase One

All graduates of the master's program in counseling at WCU for the years 1980 through 1985 (n = 171) were rated independently by the four members of the counselor education faculty. Each faculty member identified ten "exemplary" and ten "marginal" graduates with respect to their demonstrated ability and/or potential to represent the program and profession in a commendable manner. The ratings were subjective and were conducted without reference to the graduates' academic records.

Following the independent ratings, classifications of graduates as "exemplary" or "marginal" by the faculty were compared. No faculty member had rated any graduate as "exemplary" or "marginal" who had been rated in the opposite category by another faculty member. Of the 171 graduates over the six year period, nine were rated as "exemplary" by two or more faculty members and nine were rated as "marginal" by two or more faculty members. Rank-order correlations and significance levels between faculty ratings of the eighteen graduates and various admissions criteria, as available, are given below. It is important to note that the GRE Analytical score had not been used in making admissions decisions at that time in the history of the program. Minimum GRE and undergraduate GPA criteria in use were those established by the Graduate School at the time. These were undergraduate GPA of 2.50 and combined scores on the GRE Verbal and Quantitative of 800.

	r	p
Faculty rating and undergraduate GPA (n = 18)	.42	.05
Faculty rating and GRE Verbal score (n = 13)	.23	ns
Faculty rating and GRE Quantitative score (n = 13)	-.10	ns

It was particularly interesting to find that GRE Verbal and GRE Quantitative were not significantly related to faculty ratings of graduates as "exemplary" or "marginal." NTE scores were available on a number of the identified graduates and, like the GRE, the NTE was not significantly related to faculty ratings.

As I reviewed the folders of the 18 graduates, I noticed that the graduate GPAs and GRE Analytical scores of the "exemplary" and "marginal" graduates looked promising in differentiating the two groups, so I calculated rank-order correlations between faculty ratings and graduate GPAs and GRE Analytical scores, as follow:

	r	p
Faculty rating and graduate GPA (n = 18)	.79	.01
Faculty rating and GRE Analytical score (n = 12)	.60	.05

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. MORROW
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CG026235

Phase Two

The emergence of graduate GPA as the highest correlate of faculty ratings of graduates' ability and/or potential to represent the program and profession in a commendable manner and of the GRE Analytical score as the second highest correlate led to a second study. All program graduates for the years 1980 through 1986 for whom GRE Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical scores were available (n = 102) were included in this study. Product moment correlations and significance levels between graduate GPA and GRE Analytical, Verbal, and Quantitative scores and undergraduate GPA were as follows:

	r	p
Graduate GPA and GRE Analytical score	.57	.01
Graduate GPA and GRE Verbal score	.42	.01
Graduate GPA and GRE Quantitative score	.40	.01
Graduate GPA and Undergraduate GPA	.34	.01

Intercorrelations and significance levels among GRE scores and undergraduate GPA were as follows:

	r	p
GRE Analytical and GRE Quantitative	.61	.01
GRE Analytical and GRE Verbal	.59	.01
GRE Verbal and GRE Quantitative	.44	.01
GRE Analytical and Undergraduate GPA	.07	ns
GRE Verbal and Undergraduate GPA	.05	ns
GRE Quantitative and Undergraduate GPA	.02	ns

A stepwise multiple regression analysis yielded GRE Analytical score as clearly the most powerful predictor of graduate GPA, with a correlation of .57, accounting for 33 percent of the variance. The addition of undergraduate GPA, also statistically significant, raised the correlation to .64, accounting for an additional eight percent of the variance. The addition of the last two predictors, GRE Verbal and GRE Quantitative, neither of which was statistically significant, raised the correlation to .65, and accounted for an additional one percent of the variance.

Phase Three

Following the second study, tentative new admissions standards were set. These included the use of undergraduate GPA (3.00 minimum) and a combination of GRE Analytical and either GRE Verbal or GRE Quantitative scores (900 minimum). As a test of the validity of the new standards, all students currently admitted (fall, 1986) for whom GRE Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical scores were available (n = 80) were reviewed relative to the new standards. Of these students, seventeen were found who would not have been eligible for full or provisional-admission had the new standards been in effect at the time of their applications. These seventeen students were evaluated by the counselor education faculty relative to their performance in the program thus far. Twelve were ranked as below average (five of these subsequently withdrew from the program) and five were ranked as average (one of these subsequently withdrew). None were ranked as above average. The faculty voted to adopt the new admissions standards as of fall semester, 1987.

Phase Four

A follow-up study was conducted in the fall of 1992 to determine the effectiveness of the new admissions standards in predicting graduate GPA. It was anticipated that, due to restricted ranges in undergraduate GPA and GRE scores among students admitted under the new standards, the correlations between predictors and graduate GPA would decrease. All program graduates who had been admitted under the new standards (n = 67) were included in the study. Product moment correlations and significance levels between graduate GPA and GRE Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical scores and undergraduate GPA were as follows:

	r	p
Graduate GPA and GRE Analytical score	.45	.01
Graduate GPA and GRE Quantitative score	.38	.01
Graduate GPA and GRE Verbal score	.23	ns
Graduate GPA and Undergraduate GPA	.16	ns

Intercorrelations and significance levels among GRE scores and Undergraduate GPA were as follows:

	r	p
GRE Analytical and GRE Verbal	.42	.01
GRE Analytical and GRE Quantitative	.41	.01
GRE Verbal and GRE Quantitative	.30	.05
GRE Analytical and Undergraduate GPA	.18	ns
GRE Quantitative and Undergraduate GPA	.09	ns
GRE Verbal and Undergraduate GPA	.07	ns

A stepwise multiple regression analysis yielded GRE Analytical score as clearly the most powerful predictor of graduate GPA, with a correlation of .45, accounting for 20 percent of the variance. The addition of GRE Quantitative, "almost" significant (.055), and GRE Verbal and undergraduate GPA, neither of which was statistically significant, raised the correlation to .50, accounting for an additional five percent of the variance. I "suspected" that GRE Quantitative might owe its "almost" significance to its relationship to two quantitative courses in the curriculum, COUN 640-Measurement and Appraisal, and EDCI 602 - Methods of Research. The following data seem to confirm my guess.

Mean GRE Quantitative, Analytical, and Verbal scores of graduates whose 640/602 GPAs were higher than, lower than, and equal to their overall GPAs

	640/602 GPA higher than overall GPA	640/602 GPA lower than overall GPA	640/602 GPA equal to (all 4.00) overall GPA
Mean GRE Quantitative	478	429	500
Mean GRE Analytical	493	470	543
Mean GRE Verbal	477	491	540

Mean GRE Quantitative, Analytical, and Verbal scores of graduates whose 640/602 GPAs ranged from 4.00 to 2.50

	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.50
GRE Quantitative	483	436	426	415
GRE Analytical	509	506	439	355
GRE Verbal	494	498	481	490

The GRE Analytical score remains the best predictor of academic performance in counselor education at Western Carolina University. In addition to submitting undergraduate transcripts and GRE scores, all program applicants are interviewed individually, submit a written statement of personal goals and experiences, and submit three academic and/or professional letters of reference. Admissions interviews, statements of personal goals and experiences, and letters of reference are considered carefully by the admissions committee and are given particular consideration in the cases of all applicants whose undergraduate GPAs and/or GRE scores may not be representative of their potential for graduate study in counseling.

Interesting evidence of the effectiveness of our revised admissions standards:

Faculty members report a significant improvement in the academic performance of graduate students who have been admitted under the new standards.

Site and university supervisors have noticed a consistent improvement in the performance of students during their practica and internships.

The two new faculty members we have employed in the last three years were among the nine graduates rated as "exemplary" by the faculty in 1986. I was not aware of this "coincidence" until I conducted the follow-up of graduates last year and reviewed the list of graduates included in the original study.